

powerlessness. The dissenter hurts himself; he never affects the fashion. No woman, whatever her age or position or her opinion about the crinoline fashion, could avoid wearing one. No effort to introduce a fashion of "rational dress" for women has ever yet succeeded. An artist, novelist, poet, or playwright of a school which is out of fashion fails and is lost. An opponent of the notions which are current can get no hearing. The fashion, therefore, operates a selection in which success and merit are often divorced from each other, but the selection is pitiless. The canons of criticism are set by fashion. It follows that there is no rational effect of fashion. There was a rule in goblinism : Say naught but good of the dead. The rule was dictated by fear that the ghost would be angry and return to avenge the dead. The rule has come down to us and is an imperative one. Eulogies on the dead are, therefore, conventional falsehoods. It is quite impossible for any one to depart from the fashion. The principle is in fashion that one should take the side of the weaker party in a contest. This principle has no rational ground at all. There is simply a slight probability that the stronger will be in the wrong. Fashion requires that we should all affect nonpartisanship in discussion, although it is absurd to do so. Of course these weighty rules on important matters go over into the mores, but they are fashions because they are arbitrary, have no rational grounds, cannot be put to any test, and have no sanction except that everybody submits to them; •

' 196. Remoter effects of fashion. The selective effect of fashion, in spite of its irrationality and independently of the goodness or badness of its effect on interests, is a

reflection on the  
intelligence of men. It accounts for many  
heterogeneous phe-  
nomena in society. The fashions influence the  
mores. They  
can make a thing modest or immodest, proper or  
improper, and,  
if they last long enough, they affect the sense and  
the standards  
of modesty and propriety. Fashions of banking  
and trading  
affect standards of honesty, or definitions of  
cheating and  
-gambling. Public shows, dances, punishments<sub>3</sub> and  
executions  
affect, in time, standards of decency, taste in  
amusement, senti-  
ments of humanity, views as to what is interesting  
and attractive.